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any construction begins, the family and the geomancer make careful enquiries of priests, the elderly, even the gods, to be sure that the house is not placed on the site of an old temple or shrine. Indignant gods could bring untold misery on the family for generations. When construction is underway, the geomancer supervises the building of the ritually important cooking stove, a large, square, brick structure which is intimately tied to the welfare of the family. If it is clumsily built, or improperly oriented, misfortune or even death may come to family members. The family must also prevent those who bear them ill will from secretly inserting dangerous magical objects in the partially constructed stove. If the carpenters and bricklayers are ill-paid or disrespectfully treated, they too might practice various forms of witchcraft on the stove or on the main roof beam. The welfare of the family in both the present and the future generations is irrevocably involved in the construction of their home.

The original rectangle of a new rural home may vary somewhat in size, floor plan, or interior decoration, but the basic outline is the same for all. In the center of the front wall of each house are double doors which open into the guest hall. In most houses the floor of the guest hall is of beaten earth, the same as the other rooms of the house, but in more affluent homes the hall is distinguished by a concrete floor. The one village home with concrete floors throughout displays a terrazzo floor in the guest hall. This room is the stage on which a family presents itself to the world. Here one often finds a scroll of unexpected quality and such luxuries as a radio or a sewing machine; here also are the material representations of the family's charter, their ancestral tablets. These are flat, rectangular slips of wood, rounded on the top like grave stones, each inscribed in black ink with the posthumous name of a deceased member of the family. In every home these are arranged on a tall, narrow altar table set against the wall opposite the front door. To the foreign eye this altar is a clutter of religious paraphernalia, but there is order here if not neatness. The gods take precedence over the ancestors and their images are thus always to the right of the altar; men take precedence over women and thus the tablets of men are always to the right of those of their wives. Where the tablets are arranged in a small lacquer box, the more recently deceased are at the front of the box; where they are arranged on open shelves, the most distant ancestors stand on the top of the shelf at the head of a pyramid.

Individually, the tables have little significance. They are simply

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Lim Chieng-cua's restlessness was expressed in several changes in the house during our stay. The first was the ceiling in the guest hall. It was followed by a gigantic electric ceiling fan which had the effect of a stationary tornado the few times it was turned on. I think the next change was the one appreciated equally by our citified cook and the women of the Lim family, all of whom hated the clumsy hand pump that was once so admired by their neighbors. The operation began with the installation of an electric pump to fill the cistern, but continued until Lim Chieng-cua had built a tank on the roof for pressure and threaded ugly, constantly clogging pipes into the family kitchen, our kitchen alcove, and the bathing room. When the system worked it was a joy, but Lim Chieng-cua soon discovered some of the handicaps of Western "conveniences." At least once a month he could be found pulling his pump apart or poking at the clogged waterpipes. This gave his neighbors small satisfaction. The last improvement—one that motivated one of the villagers to suggest that we must be paying far more rent than either we or the Lims were willing to admit—was the introduction of a Western bathtub. Until this monstrosity arrived, the bathing room had been occupied by a handsome wooden tub under which a small fire was built each evening. The water was never hot but always warm enough to be comfortable. Its operations left nothing to be desired. One stood on the brick floor and laddled water onto one's back as slowly or as rapidly as desired. The water drained across the floor into one of the gutters that ran through all of the back rooms and that was the end of it. One day the wooden tub was yanked out and in its place appeared a lizard green, pressed-stone, full-length bathtub. A hole was poked in the wall and on the other side was placed what Americans would consider an antique water heater, a round drum with space at the bottom for a small coal fire. After what I hope was an appropriately polite period of using the new bath tub, i.e., scrubbing it out, waiting half an hour for it to slowly fill, bathing, waiting ten minutes for it to empty, scrubbing it out, etc., I returned to my practice of ladling water over myself on the brick floor. Not so the rest of the family, nor, for that matter, the rest of the village. Lim Chieng-cua's latest addition became a treat among his friends, and on nights when the women of the family were feeling lavish with fuel, innumerable shining faces made the journey through our kitchen to the green bathtub.

There are fourteen permanent members of the Lim household.